

REMARKS

Applicants again request that the Patent Office indicate that the certified copy of the priority document, European Patent Application No. 01440076.6 dated March 16, 2001, has been received and made of record in the file.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 13-21 have been examined on their merits.

Applicants herein cancel claims 15, 16, 20 and 21 without prejudice and/or disclaimer.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 17-19 are all the claims presently pending in the application.

1. Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (2nd para.) as allegedly being indefinite. Applicants traverse the § 112 (2nd para.) rejection of claim 7 for at least the reasons discussed below.

Applicants herein amend claim 7 to correct the antecedent basis error, and submit that claims 7 and 9 are now in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request that the Patent Office reconsider and withdraw the § 112 (2nd para.) rejection of claim 7.

2. Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, 13, 14 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipate by Milton *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,556,321). Applicants traverse the § 102(b) rejection of claims 1, 2, 3, 5, 13, 14 and 19 for at least the reasons discussed below.

The Patent Office has indicated that claims 15 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants herein add the recitations of claims 15 and 16 to independent

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claim 1, and cancel claims 15 and 16 without prejudice and/or disclaimer. Applicants submit that claims 1, 2, 3, 5 and 14 are now in condition for allowance, and respectfully request that the Patent Office reconsider and withdraw the § 102(b) rejection of claims 1, 2, 3, 5 and 14.

The Patent Office has indicated that claims 20 and 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants herein add the recitations of claims 20 and 21 to independent claim 13, and cancel claims 20 and 21 without prejudice and/or disclaimer. Applicants submit that claims 13 and 19 are now in condition for allowance, and respectfully request that the Patent Office reconsider and withdraw the § 102(b) rejection of claims 13 and 19.

3. Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Milton *et al.* in view of Sotom *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,796,501). Applicants respectfully traverse the § 103(a) rejection of claim 6 for at least the reasons discussed below.

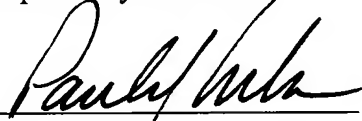
Since claim 6 depends upon claim 1 and since claim 1 is now in condition for allowance (see above discussion), Applicants submit that claim 6 is allowable at least by virtue of its dependency from claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Patent Office reconsider and withdraw the § 103(a) rejection of claim 6.

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In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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